M. Fisher 2-6 (no date) 1950 MI Middle East Baldwin, H34

Strict discipline, necessary both in everyday routine and because of liability to attack, has left its mark on Badawin ways of thought. In religion, there is little room for compromise or doubt—a strong, vivid, and intolerant faith is held. Similarly, there is a strict code of behaviour. Hospitality, in an environment without fixed routes or settlements, is a highly regarded virtue, and ordinary social intercourse has been developed into an elaborate code of manners and conduct. In view of the exigencies of human existence amongst the Badawin, it is hardly surprising that superstition and fatalism are also strongly marked. The operation of the "evil eye" and malevolent spirits is seen in everyday life—nothing is praised directly without attributing its excellence as due to God—and nazr and sadaqah were chosen.[1]

Possibly as a result of reduced physical strength, and their enforced preoccupation with household tasks, the status of women is low. Although not veiled, like the women of the settled areas, Badawin women are regarded as in all things the inferiors of men. It may be significant that among pastoral communities, religious deities are regarded as masculine in attribute. Only in the religious systems of non-pastoral peoples do we find female deities—mother-goddesses of wide influence—with a corresponding rise in importance of women above the level of mere drudges and bearers of children.

Though Badawin life is hard and unrewarding, those who follow it value it highly. A true Bedu looks down with disdain on other ways of life, particularly that of cultivators in better watered districts, for whom he often has a profound contempt as effete and subservient. Despite their own strict social organisation, the Badawin can contrast the dull routine of agricultural practice, and the looseness and self-indulgence of city life with their own courage, independence of character, adventurousness, and mobility.

Nomadism is a special response to environment, by which the frontier of human occupation is pushed farther within a region of increasing difficulty. In the past, nomadism has often been regarded as an unsatisfactory alternative to agriculture; it was believed that primitive man passed from a life of hunting and collecting first into a stage of pastoralism, and later, in places where conditions were favourable, to the fullest development of a life based on cultivation. In the opinion of H. J. Fleure and others this view must be modified—pastoralism may, in some instances, represent a special, later development *from* agriculture—a dynamic response to environmental

[1] Even Arab taxis in the cities carry a charm on the radiator.

CHAPTER XI

Faith and Prayer

The Badawin groups are all Sunnis, either of the Hanbali or Maliki schools, as opposed to the Shi'ahs of Iraq, the Zaidis of Yaman and the Riyadiyahs of Oman and adjacent country.

Though fierce in battle and ever ready to raid and kill, the Badawin has one of the strictest codes of honour in the world. His belief in the One Great Almighty God, Indivisible, All-seeing and Ever-present, is impressive.

Throughout his life the name of God is constantly on his lips, and heard in almost every sentence he uses. Recurrent phrases are:

(a) *Wallah, Billah, Et Billah Wallah* (all meaning "By God") to emphasize that he speaks the truth.

(b) *Fi'amun Illah*—In the peace of God.
Hafizh-kum Allah—God guard you.
Fidal'an Allah—In the custody of God.
To speed a parting friend or guest, and as general terms of farewell.

(c) *Tawakkal al Allah*—Put your trust in God.
Tawakkal-na al Allah—We put trust in God.
At the commencement of an undertaking, or journey, etc.

(d) *Allah Karim*—God is merciful.
To express resignation, or hope, when things seem to be going wrong, etc.

(e) *Sa'ad-kum Allah*—God assist you.
Ganwak Allah abbreviated to *Al Ganw*—God strengthen you. Used by way of greeting and to encourage a person doing some special work.

(f) *La hawla wa la quwwata illa B'Illah al 'azil w'al azkim.*—There is no might nor majesty except in God the most High and Wonderful.
To express astonishment at some strange sight, etc.

(g) *Sadd'far Allah*—God forbid.
La-ilaha-il-l' Allah—There is no God but God.
To ward off evil, etc.

The Badawin, like every Arab or true Muslim, believes that every-

A. Dickson G-6 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait [illegible]
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Mourning

When a man dies, the widow has to seclude herself from all for a period of four months and ten days. Well-to-do families confine the wife to the house for this period while Badawin women hide themselves as much as practicable in their tents. The townswoman of Kuwait actually shuts herself in a room, devoid of comforts such as carpets, etc., and can only be attended by another woman who brings her food and water. She must not see a man, or male relative, or hear a male voice.

Among the lower classes the belief about this *'ada* or custom of shutting the widow up is, that as soon as a man dies and goes to the other world, he is chained by an iron chain round his neck. This chain can only be removed by his widow's observing a proper course of mourning, for four months and ten days.

The very poor classes in Kuwait do not pay much attention to the above rule, and forty days' seclusion generally meets the case with them.

Graveyards are always looked upon as places of ill-omen and must be avoided, especially at night, as *jinns* or spirits are believed to be moving about them.

The great western graveyard at Kuwait, where the shaikhs bury their dead, is especially notorious for *jinns*, and many an eerie tale is told of people who have dared to go too near the place and have been pursued and even attacked by these evil spirits.

It is particularly bad to put your foot on a grave, and to do so after dark often results in so-called "madness". When young Mathog ibn Majid al A'aga of the Mutair at Jariya went mad for the love of a lady (see page 149) many said, and he himself is supposed to have believed, that he had accidentally set foot on a Badawin grave when he went out of his tent after dark to attend to nature.

Among the Badawin the person dying usually passes away peaceably in grave and dignified manner; this especially applies to the old. I was present at the death of one of Shaikh Hilal bin Faja'an al Mutairi's Badawin relatives, a poor man of over eighty. I was camped at Araifjan among my Badawin friends Salim al Muzaiyin's family, and the old man's tent was close by. Salim was away in Najd when the old man suddenly collapsed and gave out that his time had come. There were only women and children about and the Dhafiri camel

I. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 Ms I Kuwait
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leaves all over, especially on the head, by men slaves. After what must have been a truly terrible ordeal, the miserable girl died and her body was sent off to her old father and mother for burial covered up with her *'abba* in a car. Mr. B was furious when he heard of the deed, and Mr. A, in a stormy interview, is reported to have taken the line that by his deed he had saved his uncle B's honour, and his aunt's life to boot, and that therefore his act was a virtuous one and justified.

The Ruler, H.H. Shaikh Ahmad, is reported to have been very angry indeed when he heard of the incident, and took suitable action against the offenders. It is doubtful whether this will have any permanent result, however, for the prejudice against witchcraft (and anyone tampering with *sahar* is locally very great, and Mr. A is sure to make the most of popular prejudice. Already the story is going about that the actual spell used by the slave-girl to kill her mistress was found sewed inside lady X's pillow just where she placed her head. This trumped-up yarn was of course spread to deceive and influence public opinion.

JINNS, GHOSTS, ETC.

Dhuwaihi ibn Khamis of the 'Awazim impressed on me (21st April, 1935) that it was always wise to avoid Badawin burial places, especially at night. He explained that during darkness, and especially about midnight, the spirits of the dead often came out of their tombs and sat on them, conversing with one another. Should a person of this world happen to go near, or pass close by, the spirits often shouted after him and abused him. They went further, and forcibly prevented a man from going about his business by throwing stones at him.

THE 'ARAAJ BUSH

Among the Badawin of Hasa and Kuwait the *'araaj* bush is considered to be under the special protection of Jinns (spirits). It is never cut nor are branches ever broken from it. It is believed that anyone injuring it will be followed and tormented, especially at night, by hostile Jinns. The Badawin, on approaching an *'araaj* bush, will always invoke God's protection by a *bi'asmi 'llahi al Rahmani al Rahim* (In the

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name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate) and will cast a stone into the bush. Hence *'ausaj* bushes are always seen surrounded by a pile of stones at the base. Though men will usually joke about this if questioned, the superstition remains nevertheless deep in their hearts, and they take no risks.

HAUNTS OF JINNS

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There are two spots believed to be special haunts of Jinns in North-East Arabia:

Abrag al Khalijah is vaguely but widely reputed to be a place where a meteorite fell some seventy years ago. I have not yet visited it, but its position lies in Sa'udi Arabia, at the southern end of the Shaqq depression and close to the south-west corner of the Kuwait Neutral Zone. Every Kuwait Badawin knows the place but pretends to fear to go near it as it is said to be the home of Jinns. It has been flown over and examined from the air by certain geologists (in 1932), who were greatly interested.

According to them it consists of a hole in the ground some 4 acres in extent with cliff-like sides about 24 feet high. The 'Awazim and 'Ajman particularly fear to approach the place.

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'Ain al 'Abd.—This lies about 30 miles east and slightly north of Abrag al Khalijah, and stands on the southern edge of the Kuwait Neutral Zone close to the marshy area known as the Maqtah, which is undoubtedly caused by various salty springs. The whole marsh is covered by *'ausaj* bushes, the plant which, according to Badawin lore, is dangerous to cut lest you be haunted by evil spirits. The actual 'Ain consists of a pool of water 40 feet across and some 6 feet below the surface of the surrounding country. In the centre of the pool there is a spring which surges out of the ground. The water is strongly impregnated with sulphur and smells like bad eggs for a mile round. The pool flows away by a channel, whether natural or artificial I do not know, and eventually the water finds its way to the sea some 10 miles away.

The Arabs tell the story of how a "black thing", they know not what, lives in the centre of the pool with head like a Negro. This animal or Jinn every now and then comes to the surface, shows itself and disappears again. At other times the thing is said to come out of

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the pool and sit on the bank itself. Those who have seen it say it looks like a black man from afar. The water of the 'Ain being unfit to drink and therefore useless, the place is avoided by man. A series of tests carried out by Captain Papworth, R.E., in 1934, proved that approximately 1,000 gallons of water per hour flowed from the spring. I have myself visited the haunted spot twice, but needless to say saw nothing alarming. My escort all refused to approach nearer than 300 yards, except one man, the stalwart Mirshid al Shammari (ibn Twala).